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SUBJECT: FOPL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
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PREPARED FOR: AGM DELEGATION/FOPL BOARD

FOPL has made great progress on our priorities this year as the *"ONE VOICE FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES"* in Ontario. We do this through:

- Marketing
- Advocacy and influencing the various levels of government
- Research and development

We do these through our part time staff as well as the work of our board and task forces (The task forces include Marketing, Advocacy, R&D and CELUPL). We also work closely to ensure that our efforts and communications are aligned and in synch with all of our key associates in our sector (CULC, SOLS, OLS-North, and OLA/OPLA/OLBA) and associate members like AMPLO, ARUPLO, and others.

On a collaborative basis our activities are now showing fruit at costs that would be unaffordable to individual library systems. The return on investment for membership in FOPL has never been stronger! When I started at FOPL 2.5 years ago, we asked ourselves, "What do we need to know?" We need to know a lot before we make an investment in a province-wide marketing campaign and we have made great progress. We now have:

- A census of public library e-presences (websites, social media and social networking). This will be a critical channel for marketing libraries across our province.
- A collection of public library taglines from their websites.
- A review of the research on major public library "value" branding campaigns in Canada and the U.S.
- Focus group results and interviews with key internal and external stakeholders including librarians, library staff, library board members *and* municipal administrators.
- We now know our statistics, have them in-house with a talented team of statisticians, and are well on the way to develop new measurements for the 21st Century.
- data on Ontario public library performance over time
- data on our marketing channels, market positioning, and preparedness for a 'push' to improve Ontarians knowledge of the value and impact of libraries
- Insights from stakeholders in libraries, boards and municipalities.
- A new 2015 public opinion poll of Ontarians attitudes towards public libraries and how they've changed from our 2003, 2006, and 2010 polls.
- Online library board training modules
- I have shared this research at many libraries and events throughout 2015.

Listed below are some of the highlights (this is not a full list of my activities) of the projects that I have led this year.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Ontario Libraries Capacity Fund:** Much of the summer was spent arduously filling out these forms and applying for a grant. We have submitted a \$400K project that hits all the markers to create an

innovative, sustainable, and high impact marketing campaign for libraries in Ontario that generates data to help all libraries plan and succeed.

1. The FOPL executive director also assisted a number of members with review and research for their applications. We formally supported applications that met our goals.
2. **Lobbying:** We have made good progress over the summer.
 - FOPL was consulted the development of the *first* CULTURE Strategy for Ontario. We provided advice and data on public libraries as culture hubs. This is a cabinet level initiative and I am assured that our research will be quoted in the cabinet report. We made a formal submission to the Task Force.
 - FOPL, at our initiative, was consulted the development of the *first* COMMUNITY HUBS Strategy for Ontario. We provided a submission with detailed advice and recommendations on public libraries as culture hubs. This is a cabinet level initiative and our perspectives were quoted in the cabinet report.
 - FOPL submitted a letter to the review commission on the Municipal Act and other legislation.
 - FOPL submitted a letter to OLG Inc. and funding for libraries and their current major TV and media ad campaign highlighting their investments in libraries. We received a response that they cannot fund libraries and see the flow-through to municipalities.
 - FOPL submitted a detailed letter and recommendations to the Minister of Culture about the sunseting of the e-resources funding. OLA submitted a parallel letter to the Minister of Education. Many members submitted letters from their libraries and boards.
 - FOPL, with OLA, wrote a submission to the Minister of Finance to influence the 2016 provincial budget process.
3. **Strategic Planning:** The Board met with an external consultant and has begun the process of updating and renewing the FOPL strategic plan. This will be a key focus on early 2016 and our continued execution of our plan(s).
4. **Webinars, Symposia and Training:** FOPL continues to offer free webinars to its members and archive them on the FOPL.ca website for viewing and listening at any time. There is a ten part series on influence and advocacy as well as sessions on Statistics and CASL. In summer 2015 we offered three detailed webinars that were recorded. These included:
 - **Public Opinion Poll:** We have recently done a major field survey of Ontarians about their attitudes towards public libraries in our province. We have received the reports and are analyzing them now with our task forces! We communicated these results through symposia, webinars, press releases and more – including ED presentations to local library boards and the Marketing Think Tank. This is the 4th poll done by FOPL and this poll was updated to modern times while respecting the older data context.
 - **Public Library Statistics:** We continued our analysis of the Ontario Government's 2001-2013 open data provided by all library systems in Ontario. Major reports based on 10 measurements will rank all libraries in Ontario on their operational measures and community engagement are expected in spring 2015. This is the very first time this has been done in Canada and shows leadership from FOPL. This summer we released over a dozen reports on the performance of Ontario's public libraries from 1999-2013 to all members. We did a recorded webinar in August on this topic.
 - **How to Use Stats:** We did a webinar on how to use these data in your strategic and operational planning.
5. **Board Training:** The release of the first two modules of an online learning program for trustees using the SOLS LearnHQ environment has occurred. This project is a free modularized e-learning course/program that can be integrated into your board meetings, assigned as learning activities to

orient board members to their roles, and provide contextual access to the resources of One Place to Look and Learning by Design. Future modules are in development and will be released in the next 18 months. We will continue to highlight this at the Trustee Boot Camp at OLA Super Conference 2016.

6. **Fundraising:** The good news is that we are batting 1000 in the past 2 years having received every grant we applied for. We received funding from SOLS and OLS-North to complete the 2020 branding study and distributed these results. We received funding from the Culture Development Fund in partnership with OLA and OLBA to build advanced e-training and beyond for Ontario library board members. In January 2015 we confirmed another grant from the Ministry of Culture to continue our work on the analysis of the Ontario Public Library statistics collection. We consulted with the Ministry on the 3 year, \$10 million Ontario Library Capacity Fund to support innovation in public libraries. Let's hope our grantsmanship success continues in 2016 with the OLCF and beyond.
7. **Library Day at Queen's Park (Nov. 25, 2015) planning:** We worked closely with OLA and planned this large initiative as one of the lead organizations. Impact Public Affairs is working with us and OLA again. FOPL hosted the lunch for Queen's Park invitees and delegates. There is a lot of follow through on the many meetings with senior staff and MPs.
8. **2020 Branding Project and Tagline development:** With special funding from the Libraries 2020 project FOPL engaged a consultant to study the branding, communication and marketing status of Ontario Public Libraries. We have received the Phase 1, 2, and Phase 3 reports and have distributed a final report to SOLS/OLS-North and our members. In Fall 2015 we released an RFP to engage a consultant to brainstorm and focus group test a tagline for libraries and our marketing efforts and specifically focus on the value and impact of public libraries as well as the value of your library card with a call to action to get and use your card – aimed at teens and 18-40 year old targets. We have now hired a consulting firm and the work has started. This is another key component of our marketing plan.
9. **Libraries 2025 Summit Planning:** The executive directors of FOPL, OLA, SOLS, OLS-N and CULC accomplished a (second) Libraries 2025 Summit to repeat the success of the 2020 Summit that eventually delivered \$18 million in additional public library funding. The date was spring 2015 (April 29-30) and the hotel was the Royal York and about 350 people attended this event. It was MC'd by Valerie Pringle! Next steps include a Libraries 2025 Track at OLA Super Conference, webinars and distributions to members.
10. **OLA Super Conference:** All of our 4 sessions from FOPL were accepted by the OLA Super Conference planning committee and will be delivered in January 2016.
11. **Legal:** We continue to get requests for our legal work on:
 1. **Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation Legal Opinion and Template Library Policy**
 2. **Access Copyright Canada issues**
 3. **E-Book issues:** We continue to participate and formally support the eBook fairness in pricing campaign and participate in meetings and communication.
12. **Library Association and Agency Cooperation and Coordination Meetings:** We continue to make great progress on coordinating with the other associations and agencies in Ontario that support the needs of public libraries. OLA, SOLS, OLS-N, CULC and FOPL meet at least quarterly and we make sure to harness our energy and funds to ensure the biggest impact for our sector. I also communicate, meet and coordinate with other bodies such as our CELUPL and associate members, AMPLO and ARUPLO. The executive director attends or sends reports to the SOLS Regional Trustee

meetings. I believe that this has been a major shift in the framework of cooperation in this province and that it is acknowledged by our partners that it is better than ever.

- 13. Public Library Awards:** The executive director chaired the Ministry of Culture public library awards committee. The short list was announced by the Minister during Ontario Public Library Week and the awards will be given at OLA Super Conference 2016 during the OPLA Gala.

LOOKING FORWARD

Our dream about a major marketing push province-wide for public libraries in Ontario to promote our value and impact is within our grasp for 2016. How do we rise above promoting our branches, collections and programs and complement local marketing with a collaborative push? Can we raise awareness, library usage, and the number of cardholders of public libraries in Ontario? How do we turn these dreams into a reality? Our OLCF application is a very good start and we hope for success!

- **Marketing Campaign:** We are now in the sit-and-wait for decision stage for our OLCF application for a major province-wide marketing campaign on the value and impact of libraries in Ontario based on the research we accomplished in 2014. Keep your fingers crossed. I hope to engage other private sector funders to enlarge the project based on the government's vote of confidence.
- **Communicating Results:** Investing time and effort in making sure our members get value out of our research through press releases, tweets, blog postings, webinars, and meetings.
- **FOPL Website Redesign:** Monica has almost finished the website renewal and you will see a fresh look for FOPL.ca in January 2016.
- **Social Media:** Monica is doing a good job populating our Twitter feeds with more to come. We now have FOPL accounts on all major social media in preparation for our marketing push.
- **Lobbying:** We need to intensify our lobbying efforts with more ministries (sometimes opportunistically) as well as address funding issues and threats (PLOG, e-books, hubs, culture, legislation, e-resources, AODA, etc.)

Each of these activities supports one or more of FOPL's strategic pillars. Members have input and priority access. Our association is led by a volunteer board equally balanced between library CEOs and board members. Progress is being made! Every member enjoyed a great return on investment for their investment in FOPL and the efforts of their staff and volunteer Board.

Thank you to the FOPL Board for their support and leadership in their volunteer roles supporting our entire community. My personal thanks to FOPL's executive assistant Monica Mixemong for her great work. We look forward to continue working with the Board and members! Monica and I are only committed to FOPL work for about 12 days per month each so progress isn't as fast as we'd like but we are making progress.

As always, I'm just at the end of the phone or e-mail if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions.

Cheers,

Stephen

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The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries is a non-profit with a mandate to benefit Ontario public libraries through advocacy, research, and marketing.